

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF WORKPLACE STRESSOR

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ABSTRACT

In the fast pace of life, Stress has become an integral and pervasive part of the lifestyle. In the last few decades, the lifestyle of Indian masses has changed in such a manner that without having stress or anxiety we cannot complete the cycle of our daily routine. Some sort of stress is acceptable but excessive stress is harmful and can distort our work performance, mental and physical health, relationships in our family life and many more things. Due to newer technological development, people's skills are quickly becoming obsolete, that again creates a stress due to uncertainty of the future. As per a survey, stress is ranked number 1 risk factor for life in India. In this backdrop we try to analysis the level of stress in the workplace in India and Globally, its causes and remedial action taken by the corporate.

Keywords : *Stress, Global Epidemic, Occupational Stress*

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is not always bad, a little bit is necessary to be focused, energetic and to meet the deadlines. But in today's competitive and hectic work environment, too much pressure and burden enhances the stress level of the individuals and life starts to feel like a roller coaster of the emotions. Late night shifts, long working hours, huge targets, customer's high expectations, tight deadlines etc. are the buzz word in today's corporate world. In fact occupational stress is defined as "Global epidemic" by the United Nation's International labour organization. **Occupational stress** can be defined as the perceived gap between the job role demand and the individual's ability to accomplish that demand.



Figure 1. Burning Issues

A study conducted in Spain shows some surprising results. When workers have been asked questions specifically about the level of stress, they confirmed that their fellow employees feel headache, migraine, have become short tempered and also have become more aggressive with customers and peers. Stress is like a disease in the corporate world, where an individual is not able to maintain balance in his/her personal and professional life. On one hand stress is inversely related with the work performance of the employees, on the other hand individuals are not able to give enough time to their personal life and spoil the relationships.

India is having same history is case of workplace istress, in fact Indian people work more hour in comparison to any other developed country and stress level is quite high in India. Here are some cases which shows the level of stress in the industry:

May 17, 2016- Vineet whig (47), Chief Operating Officer of Britannica, jumped to death from a building in Gurugram, as he was fed up from his life, written in his suicide note.

Jun 04, 2016- Saumil shah (47), Head of equity in Bank of America Merrill lynch, died due to sudden heart attack.

A complex combination of lifestyle issues, pressure and competition in workplace creates a tremendous pressure on the individuals leading to heart attack, anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies among the employees. According to the data provided by Optum in 2016 (provide employee assistance in corporate) 46% of the workforce working in Indian organizations are suffering from one or other foam of stress, this study was conducted on 2,00,000 employees on 30 large organization in India. As per this survey 30% of the employees are heading towards diabetics risk, 30% with hypertension, 43% was found with skewed BMI (Body Mass Index). Stress is a burning issue in corporate India. Since childhood stress become an integral part, exam stress, career stress and then family stress and many more. As per Optum, now a days individuals are living a different age then their actual age, as per them a 32 year old person is living an age of 40 year due to their stress level and lifestyle.

One more study which was conducted by 1 to 1 help.net (company provides employees wellness programmes, Bangalore, India) on 6,000 employees in different cities, in July 2016 shows shocking results, that 80% of the respondents shows the symptoms of anxiety and 55% with symptoms of depression. The number of people with suicidal feeling raised from 2.1 out of 10 in 2008 to 8.21 in 2016. Spillover of stress due to personal and professional life is a main reason of mental illness.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the analysis was based on exploration of literature review available on the related subject, content analysis was used to scale an idea about what factors carry a connection between the measured variables. Preliminary content analysis was done in order to identify the variables. We further divide them into category to generate categorization matrix as presented below:

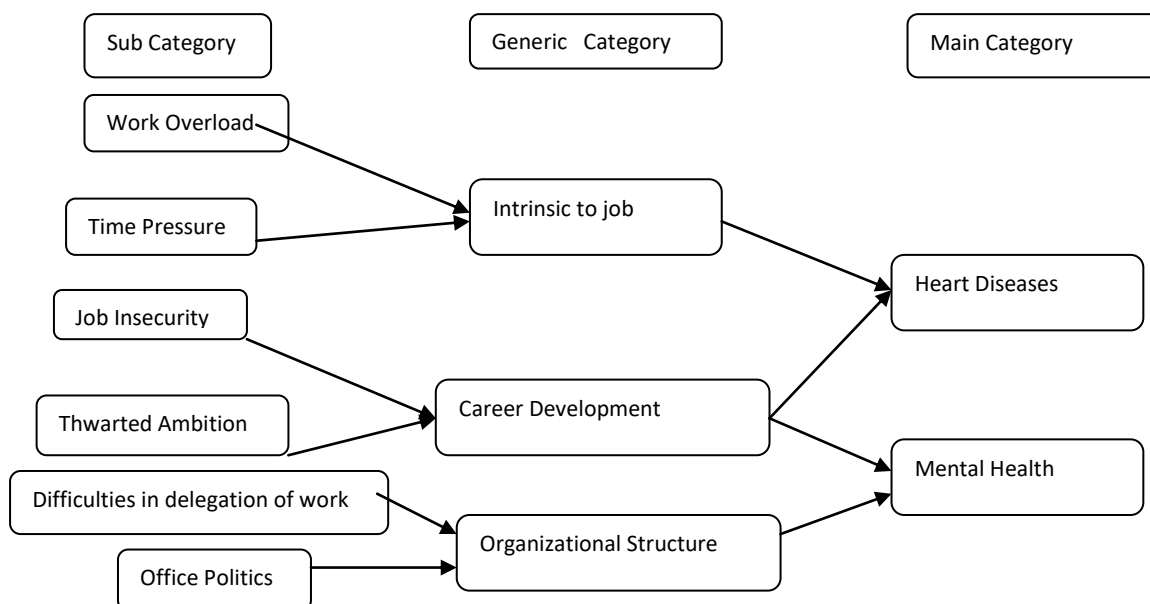


Figure 2. A categorization Matrix of Workplace Stressors

3. GLOBAL SCENARIO

Not only India, but all the developed and developing nations are facing the same situation of workplace stress, which distort the workplace environment and spoils the personal life on the individuals. As per Wills Towers Watson 2014 (A global professional service company) Indian employer’s rank 1 to stress in today’s lifestyle risk factor related to mental and physical hazards to employees. Certain others reasons are also highlighted in the study like inactivity, obesity, tobacco, nutrition etc. The survey of Towers Watson shows the global pattern of the stress among the employees at their workplace. Surprisingly they found that the reason of stress are same globally.

In India, as well as regionally and globally, stress was ranked across the region as the most pressing lifestyle risk factor

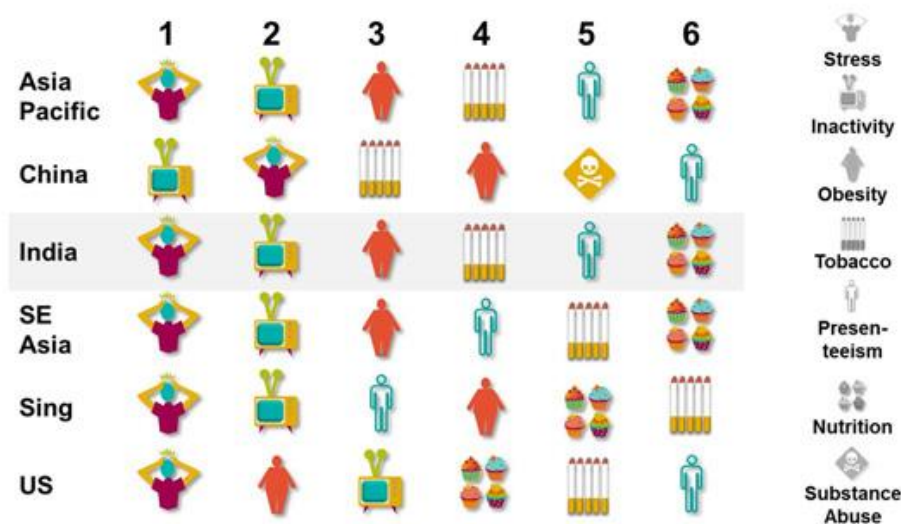


Figure 3. Top causes of stress at workplace

As per Towers Watson’s report in 2014, 40% of the job related stress is caused by unclear expectation by the organization from the employees, 38% is due to shortage of staff and heavy workload on the workforce. 38% says stress is created by imbalance in work and personal life, 29% says it is created due to low income, 26% due to lack of support from organization and many other more. Study was conducted globally, it shows the reason of stress in different countries on workplace.

Table 1. Causes of workplace stress

Particulars	India	Asia Pacific	United States	Europe, Middle East and Africa
Unclear Job expectation	40%	29%	36%	33%
Shortage of staff (Overburden)	38%	41%	52%	49%
Imbalance in work/family life (long working hours, excessive workload)	38%	32%	24%	28%
Organizational culture (lack of teamwork, unclear accountability)	32%	31%	33%	31%
Low income (Low annual increment)	29%	37%	38%	28%
working during non working hours	27%	16%	8%	9%
lack of organizational and supervisory support	26%	23%	23%	22%
lack of equipments and technological support	18%	18%	13%	15%
lack of job security	16%	16%	20%	22%
reduction in benefits provided by organization (retirement benefits, health coverage)	12%	16%	11%	7%

Source: www.willistowerswatson.com

Major Remedial steps taken by corporate to reduce stress at workplace

Various steps have been implemented by the Indian as well as global organizations to reduce the stress level among the employees. To create a cordial atmosphere 50% of the Indian organizations promoted flexible working hours, 43% organize yoga and workshops for the employees. 41% initiated education and awareness programmes to help the employees to tackle their stress.

Table 2. Remedial steps taken by organizations

Particulars	India	Asia Pacific	United States	Europe, Middle East and Africa
Flexible working hours	50%	40%	51%	50%
Stress Management (yoga, workshop etc.)	43%	38%	39%	16%
Education and awareness programmes	41%	41%	40%	26%
Employee assistance programmes (EAP)	40%	24%	85%	29%
Specialized Training	30%	26%	23%	39%

Training to supervisors	23%	24%	34%	41%
External resources to deliver programmes	16%	12%	23%	18%
Expanding EAP to dependents	15%	10%	46%	25%
Anti stress space	12%	10%	10%	4%
Written guidelines on stress	10%	9%	7%	9%

Source: www.willistowerswatson.com

4. CONCLUSION

Various organizational factors leads the stress in the workplace like unclear job expectation, low income, lack of organizational support and tools to perform the job, long working hours, lack of job security etc. Organizations have to deal strictly to reduce the level of stress and anxiety among the employees, routine counseling and consultation is required to discuss the expected job role, responsibilities and accountability system in the organization. Certain other measures can be taken by the corporate like providing gym or fitness centers in the office premises, regular health check up camp organized by the companies. In all these measures companies need to work themselves like providing job security to the employees so that they can perform fullest and should not exploit the workforce, organizations need to maintain adequate working hours with adequate pay.

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